

# Mineral of the Month Club Newsletter

May 2015



Hello Mineral of the Month Club Member:

Well, we did it again, we re-vamped the website. This time we added in a section devoted to jewelry that is made with crystals and minerals. As a rock hound the odds are that you wear crystals and minerals as well as collect them or know someone who does. Mother's Day is just around the corner, order now and she'll receive her gift in time.

**Featured Mineral:** This month we are happy to have the rock-crystal variety of quartz from one of the world's premier sources—the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas. The term “rock crystal” refers specifically to colorless, transparent macrocrystals of quartz, or silicon dioxide. Our specimens consist of beautifully developed, lustrous, hexagonal prisms of clear quartz.

Few minerals have the long history and rich lore that is associated with rock crystal. Roman scholars believed that rock crystal was ice that had frozen so solidly and completely that it could never thaw. Prior to the early 1700s when diamonds were scarce and exorbitantly priced, rock crystal was popular as a diamond substitute throughout Europe. Rock crystal continued to substitute for diamonds as late as the 1950s. Much rock crystal was recovered from the Rhine River sediments, which contained fragments that had washed down from the Alps. These became known as “Rhine stones,” a name that survives today in the glass “rhinestones” popular in costume jewelry.

**Rock Hound Tidbits:** Quartz was declared a strategic material during World War II, and thousands of pounds of Arkansas rock crystal were mined for use in wartime electronic and optical instruments. To read more about this see the special section in the write-up on the legacy of quartz-crystal mining in Arkansas.

**What's new in the Office:** its official, Lora has been bitten by the rock hound bug. This weekend while on a family trip to Pennsylvania she couldn't resist picking up Fern Fossils from St. Clair, Pennsylvania. They are from the Pennsylvanian Age, approximately 300,000 years ago. The white coating is a clay mineral, pyrophyllite that was deposited by ground water. The fossils were preserved as well as they are due to the fact that they are in anthracite, a combination of slate and shale. These babies will be posted on the website under Fossils & Carvings.

Our monthly workshop was held on Friday April 24<sup>th</sup>. The topic was Clear Quartz in which we reviewed its properties, history, uses in technology and began to touch upon all of its different shapes and forms. We soon realized that we could have three workshops solely dedicated to all of the shapes and forms of this versatile crystal.

**Coming in June:** The featured mineral will be Angelite, a gemstone variety of Anhydrite, the anhydrous form of calcium sulfate. Angelite is a rare, blue gemstone that is found only in Peru. It was formed when sulfate-rich solutions converted the calcite in limestone to massive anhydrite. Its distinctive blue color is caused by trace amounts of divalent (ferrous) iron. Collectors are interested in natural specimens of angelite for their rarity, range of pleasing blue colors, extremely fine grain, and frequent association with gypsum, which occurs as a white rind on the exterior of blue angelite nodules.

Also, Father's Day is in June and a Mineral of the Month Club membership is a great way to give a gift that gives all year long.

**We are here for you:** We are here for you and all your collecting needs. If you have any questions please contact Christine, our Mineral of the Month Club manager, by telephone at 1-800-941-5594 or via e-mail at [christine@celestialearthminerals.com](mailto:christine@celestialearthminerals.com).

We hope that our members will continue to use and enjoy our on-line informational resources. Please remember that our Celestial Earth Minerals website ([www.celestialearthminerals.com](http://www.celestialearthminerals.com)), home of the Mineral of the Month Club, provides complete ordering information, membership-renewal services, and listings of monthly offers.

Also, you can visit our Facebook pages, Mineral of the Month Club and Mineral Crew to mingle with other members and as a forum for discussions among fellow rock hounds.

Thanks again to all our members, and we'll visit with you again in June.

Dimitri, Mary, Christine, and Lora